

## Technology Harassment Documentation Tips

*Before collecting evidence ensure you are doing so safely. Ensure to the best of your ability that all the devices are not being monitored, tracked or spied on.*

Abusers and perpetrators will often misuse technology to further abuse and control victims. Misuse of technology could include monitoring technology use, including computers or cell phones, sending multiple unwanted or threatening text messages or voicemail messages, or posting negative comments or images of the survivor online.

In some cases, how technology is misused to harass and control may seem unbelievable. However, it is important to trust your instincts. If you believe that you are being monitored or stalked via technology, you might be. Narrowing down what is happening, including the tactic and the technology used, can help to determine if stalking is occurring and if so, how to address it.

### Why Keep A Stalking And Tech-Facilitated Abuse Log?

- To capture evidence at the time the abuse occurs, making it more reliable in court
- To support the evidence captured
- To help see patterns and escalations of abuse for safety planning purposes
- To provide evidence for police and assist with their investigations
- To give support workers insight into the risks a survivor faces so that they can assist further
- To support you to take back control and be proactive
- To validate experiences. This can help if an abuser minimizes, denies, or gaslights the person they are abusing. Gaslighting is a form of psychological abuse where an abuser pretends the abuse did not occur and may blame a victim for “going crazy.”
- To remind you about an abusive person’s behaviour. Sometimes memories of abuse can be blurred over time. A log might assist with making statements for court or by helping a survivor decide what to do if an abuser is trying to re-establish a relationship.

### Staying Safe While Logging Abuse

Think about where you can store the logs safely so that an abuser will not find them. This may be in a locked desk at work, with a support person or therapist, or with a trusted friend. Trust yourself. You know your situation best.

If you decide to provide your logs to police or other services, they may ask for more details about the person who is abusing you. These items may include information about the abuser’s technology, such as their:

- Internet and phone provider and account information;
- Devices, such as phones, computers, tablets, cameras, drones, external hard drives, USBs, children’s devices, etc.;
- Accounts or apps that have been used in the abuse such as social media or banking accounts;

- Email addresses, phone numbers, cloud storage accounts, usernames, avatars, pseudonyms, online identities, etc.; and
- any other information that relates to their technology, such as passwords, online associates, tracking devices, ISP addresses, identity theft or fraud, etc.

**The first step is to document everything that is happening. Documentation is important for many reasons:**

- It will give you a record of what is happening, which may be helpful if you want to pursue legal actions.
- It will also alert you to any escalation in monitoring and control, which may indicate that the danger is increasing as well.
- It will help you see patterns of the technology abuse and may help determine how the abuser is misusing a particular technology.

**Keep a log or a record of the details of each incident as the incidents occur. The log could include:**

- a list of the date and time of each incident;
- what the abuser did or said;
- what actions, if any, you took; and
- what witnesses or evidence you have related to the incident.

## **Documenting Tips**

**Keep a log of all incidents**, even if you are not sure if you want to involve the police. Some of the information you might want to include is the date, time, location, officer information (if reported), witnesses (if any), suspected technology involved (e.g., phone, email, etc.), and a brief description of what the abuser did.

**Save any voicemails, call logs, emails, or text messages** and take screenshots or photographs of the phone or computer screen and store them in a safe location separate from the device on which you originally accessed them. When taking screenshots or photographs, be sure to include as much information as possible. For instance, you will want to show the phone number of the person who is sending harassing messages, not just the contact name you assigned to that person in your phone.

**Print out emails** with the full header information included so that details such as the date and time of the email and the IP address it was sent from can be easily identified. It is important to document this from the original email. If the email has been forwarded, you will no longer have the information related to the original sender. If you do not know how to find the full header information, a simple Internet search can help explain the specific steps based on whether you use Outlook, Gmail, or another email service provider.

**Take screenshots of any posts made on social media by the abuser** to preserve them in case s/he later deletes them. When you do this, be sure to include the full URL from the bar at the top of the window and take screenshots of the abuser's profile page as well as any time and date information for the posts.

**Document any suspicious account activity** or login history if the abuser is accessing your accounts. You can do this by taking screenshots of user logs or logins by unknown devices. While this won't prove that it was the abuser accessing your accounts, if you can provide additional evidence or testimony in court, the judge might believe that the abuser was more likely than not the person accessing your accounts.

**Save anonymous messages or messages** from unknown senders that you receive via email, text, an app, or on social media. While you may not be able to tie the messages to the abuser directly, other information, such as the content of the message, the actions of the abuser, or another piece of information may be enough to convince the judge why you believe they came from the abuser.